

YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

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Click Farming Scandal Shakes Meituan Hotels

Meituan is fighting a reputation for scammy listings and inflated bookings. **Page 4**

美团酒店

找酒店 团酒店 都在美团酒店

Universities Turn Blind Eye to Abusive Tutors

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From Aid Recipient to Health Ally

Bernhard Schwartländer has watched China's health change for a decade. **Page 6**

Railways to Limit Tickets

Seeking to shake off an image of holiday trips home being hellishly overcrowded, China's railways are capping the number of standing tickets sold during the Spring Festival migration. **Page 2**

5.76 Million Spend Lunar New Year Abroad

BY KARENA HU

An estimated 5.76 million Chinese citizens will spend their Spring Festival holiday abroad, and 2.76 million will spend Spring Festival Eve abroad, Paper.cn reported.

Outbound tourism is an emerging trend. Based on research by Travelling Consulting Agency Gold Palm, China saw a 30 percent increase in outbound tourism in 2014. Although the growth has slowed, there was still a 10 percent increase in 2015. Analysts predict a 12.5 percent increase for 2016.

Countries such as South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan rank among the Top 5 most popular destina-

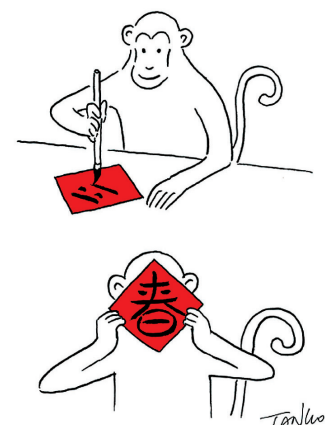
tions. Tourists heading for Asian countries account for 86 percent of the outbound total. Some 8 percent set their destinations in Europe.

But the 12.5 percent growth has not been satisfying for travel agencies, which noted an outbound slowdown in tourism growth. "There are two main reasons for the slowdown: devaluation of yuan and terrorism threats in many European, African and Asian destinations," said an employee of Gold Palm Agency who would not be named.

The company forecasts that 570,000 tourists will start their holiday journey on the eve of Spring Festival. The tourist flow

will peak three days later at 1.31 million, then face a rapid drop to 660,000 on the fourth day. ■

(Karena Hu is an intern at Beijing Today.)



Comics by Tango (©Tango2010)



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No Protection for City's Historic Mansions

BY YANG XIN

Among the 15 mansions of former princes that are indexed as Beijing's key cultural sites, 14 have been absorbed by government institutions or partitioned into residences, Kong Fanzhi, former director of Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage, told *Beijing News*. Prince Fu Palace, the most damaged, has been partitioned to house 387 families. *Oriental Daily* likened it to Beijing's own 'Kowloon Walled City.'

Reporters visited the Palace on January 26 and witnessed its worrying situation.

The palace – a key cultural relic ascribed state protection – was the mansion of Yinxiang, the 13th son of the Kangxi Emperor, and Yihui, the ninth son of the Daoguang Emperor. Today it is largely demolished and chopped up to suit

the use of its current tenants.

The interior structures of the palace have been entirely lost, *Beijing News* reported.

A nearby resident told *Beijing News* that the palace was occupied by four government work units, and its residents were mostly related staff. As they moved out and rented out their partitions, the palace ended up occupied by people with no interest in preserving the historic buildings.

The density of inhabitants and wood framework used in the exterior construction also pose a significant fire hazard. In September 2010, efforts to fight a fire in the mansion's west courtyard were blocked by the crowded streets and dense home construction.

Other princely palaces provide space

for public institutions backed by the government.

Prince Keqin's Mansion on Xinhua Lu by Xuanwumen is now the campus of Beijing No.2 Experimental Primary School and stuffed with sundries. The Prince Zheng Palace is now the Experimental Er Long Lu Middle School Attached to Beijing Normal University. Prince Seng's Mansion is now owned by the State Administration of Work Safety Supervision and a state-owned company producing bean products, *Beijing News* reported.

"It's extremely urgent to protect these historic mansions. I'm expecting the departments concerned to develop a timeline as soon as possible," Kong Fanzhi said.

Kong said preservation efforts are routinely hobbled by complicated property rights issues and the considerable sums of money needed to push the current occupants out.

Kong said these palaces should be included in Beijing's citywide project to transfers nonessential industries to neighboring cities so the buildings can be recovered as cultural relics. ■

Railways Limit Tickets to Ensure Passengers' Space

BY DIAO DIAO

The great Spring Festival migration began on January 24, and railways have been adjusting their ticketing practices ever since.

Data from 360.com showed more than 50 million standing tickets were sold. But Huang Xin, deputy director of Transport Operations at China Railway Corp, said only 6.39 million standing tickets were sold.

Spring Festival migration marks the yearly peak in railway transportation as hundreds of millions of people return from their workplace to their homes.

China Railway primarily sells hard and soft sleeper tickets, as well as hard



CFP Photos

and soft seats. Standing tickets are available only when there is great demand.

China Railway arranged as many trains as possible to ensure all passengers can get home on time. It sold standing

tickets after getting the permission of the passengers.

Beijing Youth Daily reported that the railway company has been restricting the number of passengers on each train. High-speed trains don't have standing tickets, and second-class bullet trains may have only 15 standing tickets per train car. For ordinary trains, hard seats and standing tickets together must number no more than 200. Soft seats and sleeper cars are not allowed to have standing tickets.

China Railway also suspended the sale of instant noodles on bullet trains this year to avoid offending other passengers with their strong smell. ■

Pirate Radio Stations Busted for Promoting Penis Pills

BY YANG XIN

The Beijing Cultural Law Enforcement Team and Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau busted a pirate radio station operating out of a high-rise residential building in Tongzhou District on January 19.

The station was one of many in suburban Beijing that are used to broadcast round-the-clock advertisements for erectile dysfunction medicines and penis pills making more spurious claims.

Eleven such pirate radio stations were aiming their signals at the Tiantongyuan Subway Station, *Beijing News* reported. Pirate stations for similar fake medicines have been found at Beijing University of Chemical Industry in Chaoyang Street, Xingfu Street in Dongcheng and Liujiayao in Fengtai District.

Beijing police seized a gang of 10 people operating one such pirate radio station in June 2015. The group had signed an advertisement contract with a nearby private hospital, which offered 800,000 yuan for three months of advertisements.

Since March 2014, police have arrested seven suspects and seized more than 50 pirate radio transmitters.

In addition to their use in illegal trade, pirate radio stations also pose a threat to civil and military air communications and disrupt the signals of legally operated radio stations.

An employee from the Beijing Radio Administration told *Beijing News* that the frequencies used for public communication are close to those used for civil aviation, and pirate radios frequently obstruct airline communication.

In September 2015, authorities seized three pirate radio transmitters that disrupted a military parade. The Radio Administration received more than 100 complaints from airlines about disruptive radio stations during 2015.

Radio transmitters can be purchased online. More than 520 Taobao stores sell FM transmitters, and the price varies from several hundred yuan to tens of thousands of yuan depending on the signal's strength and range. ■



Photo by Beijing News

City Eyes Tongzhou as Next Construction Target

BY DIAO DIAO

The municipal government is stepping up its plans to develop Tongzhou district with new infrastructure projects, according to Huang Yan, director of Municipal Commission of Urban Planning, and Yue Peng, mayor of Tongzhou.

Huang said Tongzhou's population has grown from 0.9 million to 1.3 million residents over the last years. The district is desperately in need of better connection to the city center.

In addition to the existing subway Line 6 and Batong Line, the first part of Line 7 will connect Tongzhou to central Beijing by 2017. A new expressway in the Guangqu Road area is also scheduled for completion.

Yue said Tongzhou is cooperating with the districts of Dongcheng, Xicheng and Haidian to pool education resources.

Several university-affiliated schools will move to Tongzhou, and other universities will build affiliated middle and high schools in the district. Beijing Institute of Technology and Beijing International Studies University have confirmed plans to open affiliated high schools in Tongzhou.

Other high schools planning branch locations in Tongzhou include Beijing No.



CFP Photos

2, 4 and 5 Middle School, Jingshan Middle School, Huangchenggen Primary School and Beihai Kindergarten.

Tongzhou is also developing its cultural sites along the former Grand Canal. The district is best known for its iconic Randeng Tower and Beiqi Great Wall, as well as its canal systems.

Li Wei, director of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, said a

center for intangible cultural heritage will be built in the district.

Regarding medical services, Tongzhou is constructing four new medical centers that will enter use by the end of this year.

To protect the environment, district officials plan to relocate 500 polluting companies in the next year. By the end of 2017, all heavy polluters should be removed from the district, Yue said. ■

Beijing Universal Studios Location to be World's Largest

BY DIAO DIAO

It's been three months since Beijing Tourism Group broke ground on Universal Studios Beijing, and Duan Qiang, chairman of the group, said the park is on schedule to open in October.

Liu Yi, general manager of the group, said a single ticket will guarantee access to whole park, and that the group is starting on a second park that adds more Chinese elements. Universal Studios Beijing, the park's sixth location, is expected to be the world's largest. Duan said the theme park and resort area will take up 4 square kilometers, making it five times the size of the park's Singapore location



and twice the size of its Japan location.

Two hotels in the resort area will begin construction this year.

Liu told *Beijing Youth Daily* that

the price of admission will depend on the market and will be similar to park admission costs in the US and Singapore. "The price of most domestic theme parks is about 200 yuan. The price for Universal Studio will be more expensive," Liu said.

The park will feature rides based on American movies such as *Jaws* and *Jurassic Park*. Duan said films such as *Harry Potter* will also be included.

The second park will include many Chinese elements such as *Journey to the West*, pandas and popular Chinese animations and stories. ■

Oral Test Arrives for High School Examinees

BY DIAO DIAO

High school admission tests may soon include an oral English section to test an applicant's experience in practical use of the language, according to a January 25 announcement by Zang Tiejun, deputy dean of the Beijing Education Exam Authority.

The details of the test are still being discussed by the committee.

Students who take the exam in 2016 will not have the oral test. The current speaking and the listening test will be taken on computers.

Zang Tiejun said that in order to build up students' interest in English and encourage better English, the speaking test is more important than the current grammar test.

Other subjects may also face adjustments.

Zang said the physical science section may use some questions related to museums to encourage students to absorb knowledge from outside the classroom.

Zang said the physics and math sections may introduce more story problems.

"Many people can't understand the instructions when they buy appliances, which shows a failure of basic scientific literacy," Zang said, "We aim to cultivate students with practical knowledge."

In terms of the Chinese test, Zang said that there will be more classic articles related to historic wars and ancient culture.

According to the statistics released by the Beijing Education Exam Authority, the number of students who took



Photo by num1school.com

part in the high school entrance test last year was 68,000 – down for the ninth year in a row.

Zang said another decrease is predicted for this year, but that the change will be slight. ■



Worker Fills Office with Chili Smoke to Seek Rightful Pay

It's a bad idea to withhold an employee's pay before the Chinese New Year holiday: it's a worse idea when that employee is from Guizhou province and has an uncanny tolerance for pepper oil.

After Ye's employer in Wenzhou negotiated his 56,000 yuan in unpaid wages down to 20,000 yuan – which the company still refused to pay – Ye broke out a hot plate, pan and bottle of chili oil and proceeded to smoke out the entire office in revenge.

Police arrived after most of the employees fled and helped to mediate a settlement, with Ye to receive 20,000 yuan before the holiday and the remaining sum afterward.

(Tencent News)

Internet Directs its Venom at Foreigners who 'Shot' Birds with Fake Guns

The Chinese Internet is hunting for foreigners who were spotted "shooting" gulls with a pair of prop guns in Kunming's Green Lake Park on February 1.

It doesn't really matter that police were called, investigated the weapons, and left thoroughly satisfied that they were props for a photo shoot.

In what may be one of the stupidest comparisons to grace QQ News, commentator Li Gan mused about how the foreigners would escape punishment for brutally slaughtering the gulls while Chinese university students faced 11 years in prison for merely capturing and selling them.

(ThePaper.cn)

Drunk Driver Arrested in School's Drop-Off Zone

A professional chauffeur surnamed Chen was arrested and had his license revoked after operating a friend's car in a school drop-off zone while intoxicated.

Chen's friend, who exited the vehicle with his child, asked Chen to help him move his car while he walked the child to the school gates. Chen agreed, even though he was drunk.

He was stopped on suspicion of drunk driving when traffic police in the drop-off zone noted a potent smell of alcohol on Chen's person. A breath test confirmed he exceeded the legal blood alcohol limit.

(Tencent News)

Suning Seeks Foreigners for Deliveries During Spring Festival

With Chinese workers heading home for the holidays, Suning is attempting to supplement its workforce with foreign interns.

One of the foreigners, a Peking University student named Samuel Keith, said a temporary job would be an interesting way to explore the city and practice his Chinese.

Although Suning's couriers usually make their deliveries on three-wheel scooters, the company has rules that prohibit novice drivers from using its vehicles. The foreign workers will share a vehicle with another driver and help to check the addresses and phone to find out whether package recipients are home.

(Tencent News)



Meituan Center of Latest Hostile Click Farming Scandal

BY KARENA HU

Photo by Platium.kr

After merging with Dianping.com, group purchase website Meituan has become entangled in a scandal involving click farming and other fraudulent practices in its hotel reservation business.

Click farming, a form of click fraud, directs large groups of people to click purchase links and boost apparent website sales. It's a common tactic used by China's online retailers. CCTV reported a massive click farming campaign by Taobao in December, when one click-farming group was exposed to be driving fake orders to Taobao shops.

With its \$3.3 billion in finances, the Meituan-Dianping group has been exploring movie tickets, hotels and food delivery. But strong competitors like Ctrip.com have left the new company at a disadvantage in hotel bookings. The recent scandal involves not only fake orders, but also fake comments, prices and fictitious hotels.

Black Trade

This is not Meituan's first time exploring click fraud.

In 2014, Meituan was criticized for using click farming to promote its take-out service. The company boasted 1.5 million takeout deals per day, but an investigation by Kanchai.com found the "food deals" mostly consisted of non-food products such as locks and cosmetics sold on the company's take-out platform.

In the hotel sphere, a unique reservation system is what made it possible for Meituan to boost its clicks so quickly. While traditional room booking services account for room type and check-in time, Meituan users must purchase hotel coupons before making their reservation.

"My hotel has 12 rooms. We can accept at most 360 reservations per month. But if the reservation is made via coupon, it can appear we had more than 1,000 bookings. That leaves a huge gray area for manipulation," said Wang Si, a Tianjin hotel owner, in an interview with Sina.com.

Meituan gets a commission of 8 to 10 percent on each order. The cost of click farming involves paying that commission fee and acquiring a large number of accounts. Pre-registered accounts can be purchased on Taobao for as little as 0.2 yuan each. When considering the subsidies Meituan offers to both hotels and users, the cost for click farming approaches zero.

"It's an easy way to boost your hotel ranking without spending anything," Wang said.

Most of the click farming is being driven by the hotel themselves, but some have recruited customers to help by making special offers, such as accepting nine 10-yuan hotel coupons for 100-yuan room.

Hotels on Meituan seem to share one common feature: an unbelievably low price. Some rooms are priced as little as 10 or 20 yuan.

With few exceptions, the stated prices are false and hotel staff will instruct whoever made the booking that they must pay more or risk losing their reservation. Others attempt to deter cheap guests by saying the room will lack a private toilet and hot water.

Shen Huaxuan is a hotel owner in an ancient town in Zhejiang province. He said the passenger flow in the town where he does business is split between 10 hotels listed in the first three pages on Meituan.

At first that sounds odd, because Meituan lists 20 hotels on each page. In fact, the same hotels appear under multiple names throughout the listings.

"A hotel might have five or six names registered by different family members. Some hotels use real photos while others grab random pictures from the Internet," a hotel owner in Zhejiang province told Sina.com.

Reasons

"Our shop will not be closed for click farming if we're caught. But without click farming, all we would do is lose money," said a Taobao shop owner who would not be named.

It's a common saying on Taobao among business owners who turn to click farming. To support it, a highly developed industrial chain provides accounts and buries their activity from supervision.

Professional click farmers enter the industry by joining online chat groups and paying a "membership fee" for training. In addition to name and gender, candidates are asked to provide their birth date, address, IP address and a photo of their ID card. Click farmers can earn between 200 and 300 yuan per day according to the number of orders they complete.

On shopping websites that require verified shipping, such as Taobao, the workers frequently receive empty packages. *Chutian Metropolis Daily* reported that one of the larger click farming groups has 2,000 members.

The websites themselves have been reluctant to step in. Many online mar-

kets, including JD.com and Dianping, are plagued by click farming.

Wang Zhongping, general manager of Hongling Capital, told *Beijing News* that many companies can't profit in the early phase of their establishment. To run a business, they need investors support. Fake sales are a way to inflate their apparent user base.

"The number of sales is something every investor wants to know. Most of them expect a fake number, but few are aware of just how fake it is," Wang said.

Troubled Market

"Almost every online retailer has to deal with click farming. Generally, click farming scales back when the company finds steady market performance and faces less financial pressure. But for firms sandwiched between competitors, click fraud never goes away," an anonymous regional manager told Sina.com.

But click fraud risks collapsing customer trust.

After the hotel click fraud scandal was unveiled, Meituan released a statement that click farming was only a minor action limited to only a few hotels. It announced a zero tolerance policy for hotels caught using click farming to compete.

The Administrative Measures for Online Trading released in 2014 declared click farming to be unfair competition, punishable by fines of up to 20,000 yuan. It also grants standing to competing businesses who wish to seek legal action.

The regulation has had absolutely no affect in curbing click farming.

"There is no effective method to end click farming today," says Zhu Zhengyu, an analyst for Analysys International. Zhu said the best solution may be to leave it up to the free market.

"Bad performance will decrease the company's reputation and crush investor faith. For companies who care too much about transaction volume, that uncertainty may be a real threat," he said. ■

(Karen Hu is an intern at Beijing Today.)

School System Leaves Grad Students no Way to Fight Abusive Tutors

BY YANG XIN

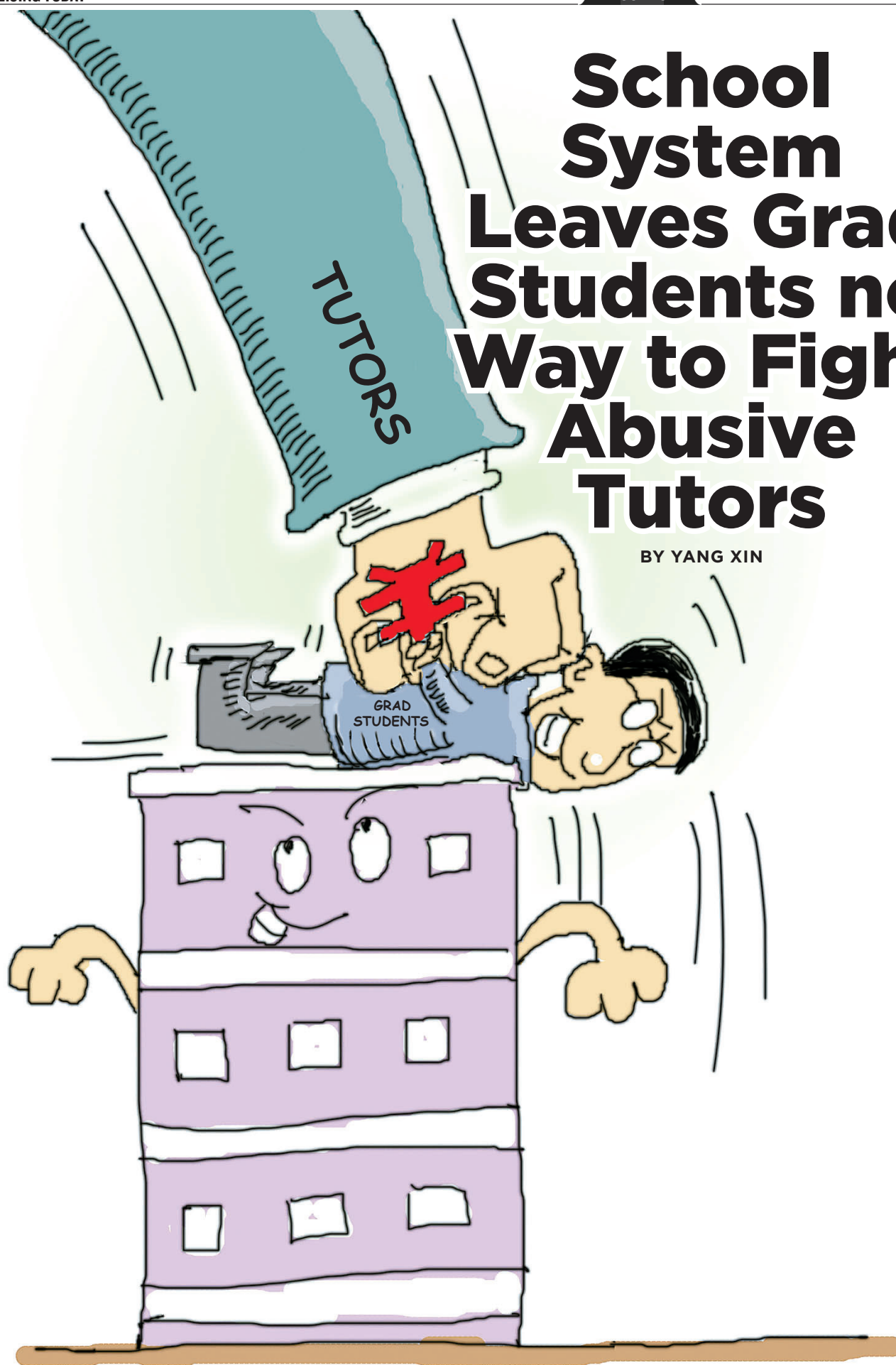


Photo by CFP

Jiang Huawen, a third-year grad student at Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications (NJUPT), leaped from the school's teaching building in an apparent suicide on January 25.

After the 25-year-old's death, an alleged close friend of Jiang published an article condemning Zhang Daiyuan, Jiang's former tutor, for pushing Jiang to his death.

That article began a widespread denouncement campaign as more and more former students stood up to condemn the tutor for verbally abusing students, stealing their internship income, appropriating their university support funds and sexually harassing female students.

Jiang's suicide was not the first, and it

will most likely not be the last.

On May 18, a grad student at Central South University leaped to his death from the school library, leaving behind a 5,000-word note accusing his tutor of deliberately blocking his dissertation.

In July 2014, Wu Chunming, a professor and postgraduate tutor at Xiamen University, was revealed to be sexually harassing his female students and driving one student to self mutilation.

Tutors' Abuse of Power

The tutor-student relationship has its roots in feudal times, when tutors represented authority, and students were obliged to obey. Total respect and obedience to teachers is considered both a virtue and a shackle on China's students.

"I feel that tutors in Chinese universities have too much power in determining students' studies and graduations. From the thesis opening speech to the graduation oral examination, tutors are given exclusive veto rights," a postgraduate student who refused to be named told Jiangsu News Radio.

Xiao Yuan was a Ph.D student majoring in architecture at Xiamen University. She could not tell how many times she has been to her tutor's office to ask for a signature on her paperwork. "Tutors can make things as difficult for you as they wish. And you have nowhere to appeal to unless you want to be expelled," Xiao Yuan said.

"For tutors, it's just a momentary slip whether to let you pass your graduation oral examination or not. Once you offend

them, you'll never pass. No one will help you or sympathize with you."

Reluctant Universities

At Chinese universities, tutors are responsible for postgraduate students' studies. Even other faculty members and school leaders have no right to interfere in their interactions.

The exclusive control over students breeds room for favor trades, China Youth Net wrote.

Universities further lack any motive to supervise tutors' behavior, making the tutor evaluation system a mere formality.

China Youth Net said universities are rated by the number of postgraduate and Ph.D candidates they can recruit. In this regard, tutors are precious human resources that the universities rely on to manage their booming recruitments.

In Zhang's case, students frequently reported his abusive behavior to school administrators. The reply was always the same: "Just take it."

Management of the tutor-student relationship is almost a blank space in China. There is no supervision system in the university nor channels to receive and evaluate student complaints, said Chen Gang, a social commentator to Jiangsu News Radio.

Multiple Tutor System

Instead of having one tutor to decide a grad student's study and graduation process, the multiple tutor system used in foreign universities allows two or more tutors to guide one postgraduate students to avoid abusive use of power.

Furthermore, many Western universities have a postgraduate studies committee to assist tutors in teaching and guiding grad students.

In 2004, several top domestic universities, including Renmin University of China and Sun Yat-Sen University, launched a trial project to test the multiple tutor system. Nanjing University and Xiamen University have also implemented their own trials.

Groundbreaking.cn said many universities across China have pushed forward with the reform to some extent. Some have granted students the opportunity to rotate through laboratories during their first year and choose the best tutor. Nevertheless, the reality is that most students are expected to decide their research path and contact the tutor before even sitting the grad school exams.

In terms of the supervision and evaluation of tutors, Western universities have a comprehensive evaluation system, which assesses not only the tutors' scientific and academic capabilities, but also his or her ideological and ethical standards and achievements in the cultivation of students.

The Guideline on the Deepening of Postgraduate Education jointly published by the Ministry of Education, the National Development and Reform Committee and the Ministry of Finance in 2013 requires universities to intensify their tutor management and evaluation process: the growing number of tutors abuses show the document has no effect in reality.

Grad students are in an inherently weak position in relation to their tutors. The uneven situation will not be changed by a piece of paper or a detailed rule. To truly repair the student-tutor relationship, universities will need to rethink academic authority and grant grad students a method to supervise their tutors, Groundbreaking.cn wrote. ■

WHO China Director Sees New Role in Changing Country

BY SIMINA MISTREANU

Photo by Simina Mistreanu

Bernhard Schwartländer has been the World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in China since 2013. Prior to that, he held positions in organizations such as UNAIDS, the World Bank and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The German national has worked in China before: between 2007 and 2010, he was the UN Country Coordinator on AIDS in Beijing; and in the early 1990s, he came to the country to investigate sexually transmitted infections in the context of public health.

Over time, Schwartländer has seen China rapidly change. With the growing economy, many public health-related problems have been addressed, including access to health insurance and the transmission of infectious diseases. But vulnerable communities persist – especially in rural areas and the western interior. Despite China's rising standard of living, there are still 70 million people who are stuck in poverty; 40 percent of them end up there because of health problems, Schwartländer said.

The WHO representative sees his role and that of international organizations in China changing. It used to be that WHO helped the country to provide health services, which is what the organization generally does in developing countries. But now, WHO's work is centered around improving exchanges between China and other countries in research and medicine development, including helping the China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA) to achieve international standards; and in finding “out-of-the-box” solutions to various problems.

Financing has changed as well. With China's economic growth, project funds from other countries have basically dried up.

“There's not a single (government) donor that gives us money for projects in China because they all say, ‘China has enough money; we bring our money to

Africa,’” Schwartländer said. “It was a huge change also in terms of the projects and what we do.”

The office now receives project money from new sources, including foundations such as Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies, which are interested in improving China's drug regulatory system, tobacco control and road safety.

As in other countries, WHO works closely with the Chinese government to support new laws, run pilot projects and – most daunting of all – implement the country's comprehensive health reforms.

Health Reform

In the 2000s, China began a wide-reaching health reform. It was probably the biggest project of its kind in the world, first because of China's size, and secondly because it was trying to bring “a fundamentally dysfunctional system into modern times,” Schwartländer said.

He recalled his first professional trip to China, in the early 1990s. “In my naïve mind I was always thinking that this is a good socialist health care system, where everybody had full access to health care,” he said. “But I very quickly recognized that in many ways this system is totally driven by money.”

Because doctors had extremely small salaries, a system was created in which they were putting markups on services and medicines in order to make a living and support the hospitals. In some cases, doctors would buy MRI or CT scan machines as investments, knowing that eventually they would turn a profit. The quality of health care depended on how much money the patients were willing, or able, to pay. In some cases, if the patients couldn't afford the medicine, they were left to die.

That still happens today for some diseases that aren't covered by insurance schemes, Schwartländer said.

“I think the health care system has sig-

nificantly improved, and it's now really a question of quality,” he said. “People are covered by basic insurance schemes. The problem today is that the scheme doesn't cover enough. Many of the very expensive drugs, for cancer or (other diseases), are not really included (...). If you're not covered for something that's not part of the essential drug list, you still may get in the situation that you will not survive a very serious disease because you can't afford access to the medicines and the treatments.”

Another challenge is the downfall of primary health clinics, or family doctors, the WHO representative said. Because primary-care doctors couldn't add substantial markups to their services, both doctors and patients gravitated toward specialized hospitals. That explains why most Chinese hospitals are constantly overcrowded.

A system that relies almost entirely on specialized hospitals is much too expensive, Schwartländer said. So China is now working on building a “tiered system,” where people are placed in primary clinics or specialized hospitals and moved from one tier to another depending on their needs.

China's International Role

As China's economy has shifted, so has its position in the international arena for health care and research.

Other countries have stopped financing WHO projects in China that would be typical for developing countries. But instead organizations are showing interest in research and medical collaboration, as well as bringing the regulatory system up to international standards.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation wants to help upgrade the Chinese regulatory system to boost innovation in the pharma sector, Schwartländer said. Similarly, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, supports a program through which Chinese-produced vaccines are “pre-qualified” by WHO, which ensures they're produced at international standards.

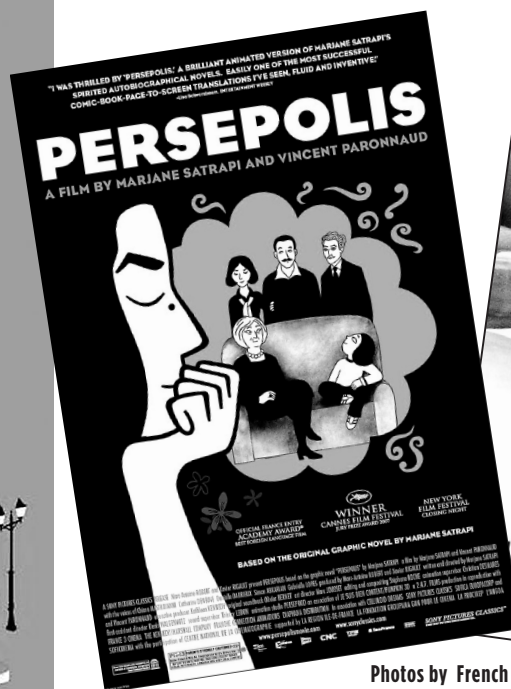
“It's a very different strategy, how we engage China as a partner,” Schwartländer said. “On one hand, where can we really help in their own development, but then how can we engage China as a very active and helpful partner globally in terms of innovation of health products: pre-qualified vaccines, pre-qualified drugs, which can be produced at high quality and much cheaper here.”

In its relations with the Chinese government, WHO brings in foreign experts for meetings with government officials; gives assistance for legal initiatives such as banning smoking in public places in Beijing, and soon possibly all over China; supports other projects such as the “Healthy Cities” program, which aims to engage mayors across China in building healthier environments; and offers feedback on various areas of diseases.

Currently, China could do better in managing hepatitis and tuberculosis, Schwartländer said. In the area of AIDS, which is his specialty, the WHO representative said the HIV crisis related to the black blood market in the 1990s has been fully contained. But there's recently been an upsurge in the spread of HIV in urban gay communities. The issue would require a more open conversation about health risks among gays, and the strengthening of the NGO culture, he said.

In his years in China, Schwartländer says he's learned it's important to build his partners' trust and offer feedback that includes possible solutions.

“I personally spend a lot of time, and I read a lot in social media to understand where things are going, and then what's the wheel that I can turn to change something a little bit,” he said. “It's small wheels that we have because I don't have billions of dollars. But sometimes I need to find the small wheel that might make a big difference because you suddenly reach somebody with an idea who then can translate this into action.” ■



Photos by French Culture Center



February is China's 2016 holiday season and a month for new films. To accompany the cinema rush, the French Culture Center is providing viewers with a series of French films for the coming spring.

From January 20 to February 17, the center will screen films from the sixth edition of the Online French Film Festival.

The festival is an innovative concept designed to cast light on a new generation of French filmmakers, allowing web users across the globe to share their enthusiasm for French cinema. Now in its sixth year, the festival returns with new films, new

partner platforms and festival screening at movie theaters around the globe.

From February 17 to 21, the center will screen four films about the roles of women in society. Selections include *Sur la Planche* (2011), *Entre Nos Mains* (2010), *La Vie Domestique* (2013) and *Persepolis* (2007).

Sur la Planche is a documentary about four young women who work long hours at a local factory. The documentary shows how they have been cornered by events and how their lives revolve around men and an empty house.

Entre Nos Mains is about how a financially-strapped lingerie factory returns to life. Most of the employees in the film are women, and through their endeavors they discover personal freedom.

La Vie Domestique discusses how women find balance between career pursuits and domestic obligations. The film follows Juliette, who lives in a residential suburb of Paris. All the women are in their 40s and have similar lives: they raise children, keep up their homes and wait for their husbands at night. Juliette has a decent job, but she also runs errands, picks up children and takes care of the whole family. The daily tasks gradually drain her.

Persepolis is a 2007 French-Iranian-American animated film based on Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical graphic novel of the same name. The story follows a young girl as she comes of age against the backdrop of the Iranian Revolution. ■

French Film Arrives for Spring

BY WANG YAN



Italian Author Explores the Destruction of Pompeii

BY SIMINA MISTREANU

Italian journalist, writer and filmmaker Alberto Angela presented *The Three Days of Pompeii: 23 to 25 October 79 AD: Hour by Hour the Greatest Tragedy of Antiquity*, his latest book, on January 28 at the Italian Cultural Institute.

During the event, which was organized by the Italian Cultural Institute and the Italian Embassy in Beijing, the author talked about the new research methods and technologies that have allowed scholars to find new answers about the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, which buried the ancient city of

Pompeii under six meters of volcanic ash and pumice.

The presentation included the screening of a documentary about life in ancient Pompeii and the events after the volcano's eruption.

The book, *Three Days of Pompeii*, will be published next fall in China. Part of the proceeds will be donated to support the restoration of the Adone Ferito fresco in the eponymous Pompeian dome.

"Alberto Angela's commitment in the dissemination of historical and scientific knowledge is a real example of profes-

sionalism," said the Italian Ambassador in China Ettore Sequi. "The publication of the book in Chinese comes at a time when Italy and China are working together to achieve an ambitious project involving some of their UNESCO sites, starting from Pompeii and Xi'an."

Angela has written several other books popularizing science and history, including *Sharks! Predators of the Sea* (1997), *A Day in the Life of Ancient Rome* (2007) and *The Reach of Rome: A Journey Through the Lands of the Ancient Empire, Following a Coin* (2013). ■



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Rushing Home: Migrant Workers Stuck Between Cities, Hometowns

With 2016 Chinese Lunar New Year approaching, migrant workers across the country are beginning their journeys home. According to statistics from the Ministry of Transportation, Chinese rails will carry an estimated 2.9 billion passengers between January 24 and March 3 during “Chunyun,” the great Spring Festival migration.

However, migrant workers this year seem to be rushing home much earlier.

A weak labor market left many migrants unable to find work after December. Faced with the high costs of city living, many opted to return home earlier than usual.

In 2015, China’s floating population fell by 5.7 million for the first time in three decades. Last month, factories around the country announced their lowest output in three years.

“There is a 40 percent reduction both in employment and migrant workers this year,” the director of Andemen Migrant Worker Market in Nanjing, Jiangsu province told People’s Daily Online.

The Rush Home

The year 1987 marked China’s first scramble to get home. There were 700,000 migrant workers returning home with standing tickets that year.

“People flooded the train cars with huge bags held over their head. All of sudden, there were passengers everywhere. They were sitting in the halls, on the luggage racks and even in the toilets,” said Li Jianxin, a train conductor who experienced the wave, in an interview with Xinhua.

The first generation of migrant workers were born in the 1960s and sought career opportunities in Southern China’s early emerging industries. Their off-



CFP Photo

spring, born in 1980s, became the second generation of migrant workers. Compared to last generation, the second generation has embraced the consumerism and individualism of city life. A high percentage of these workers choose to stay in big firms in cities, though a few return to their hometowns after amassing a small war chest of savings.

Most migrant workers today are part of the third generation. Born in the 1990s or at the end of the 1980s, the new generation has no experience with farm work and seek permanent relocation to the big city.

China’s last migration spike came during Spring

Festival 2009, when the 2008 global financial crisis cast a shadow over production and sent more migrants than ever back to their hometowns.

The latest spike in migration may have more to do with urban-rural conflicts and a clash of culture between city dwellers and new migrants.

“I feel like the city refuses to welcome me no matter how hard I try to fit in,” said Liang, 31. He is one of the last construction workers remaining in Beijing after his peers headed home. He plans to bring his son a laptop and his wife a rose-gold iPhone 6S as presents this year.

Liang said his dream of working in the city is much different than his father’s. He said he wants to be part of the city he works, and to enjoy a better life there. He describes his hometown as a vague memory.

“When the holiday break passes, I want to pursue a college degree and an architecture certificate,” Liang said. “We all have to head for the cities. Urbanization is the trend in our society.”

Measures Released

“Hometowns are rooted deeply in most migrant workers’ hearts,” says Yang Tuan, director of social policy research at Beijing Academy of Social Science’s Institute of Sociology. “They have a strong affinity to the earth.”

Yang predicted that a new wave to rush home will peak in five to 10 years.

Feeling the pressure, some migrants have elected to start small businesses in their hometowns. By October, about 2 million migrant workers returned from the city to start their own business, Xinhua reported.

The government is exploring new incentives to encourage migrant workers to open their own businesses. One is a special fund to support migrant worker business projects, which would seek funding from urban hukou holders. Connections to find money are a key barrier for migrants seeking to start a business in the city.

The government is also searching for a better way to offer job opportunities and training to migrant workers. Several job fairs across the country will target migrant workers this year.

“Employment took a dive in 2009, but that isn’t the case this year,” said Yin Weimin, head of China’s Ministry of Human Resource and Social Security.

Yin also announced plans to develop a skills development program for migrant workers. ■

By Karena Hu
(Karena Hu is an intern at Beijing Today.)